

The villager Ramazan Iitem about his village which will be flooded by the Ilisu dam:

I was born and grew up in the village Cöltepe, which is located in the central district of the province of Siirt. In 1993, all the villagers, including I and my family, were forcefully displaced from the village by security forces and village guards.

I am unemployed and have no skills needed for urban employment. In the village, farming and animal husbandry were sufficient enough for our livelihood.

When we heard that there was a new law for returning to the villages, we were very happy. But, now, we are confronted with the dam. Nobody among the responsible bodies asked us what we are thinking about the dam. Not a single person from the dam building companies ever came to us to ask our opinion about the dam issue. I suppose that they do not regard it as necessary.

I do not want the area where I stay and live to be flooded. Where are our intellectuals, why do they not oppose? I want to return to my village.

Province Siirt, village Cöltepe

Ramazan Iitem

17.06.2006

The farmer Cumhuriyet Aydin about his village Yazlica which will be flooded by the Ilisu dam:

13 years ago, I left my village. When I was in the village, my situation was very good. After my village was burnt, I went to the province of Batman. During my life in the village, I was occupied with the agriculture and stock farming, I was able to make a living that way.

My land in the village is registered for what I paid taxes. I grew up there, and all my family graves are there in the village as well.

At present, I am living in the province of Batman. Economically, socially and psychologically, I am in a very disadvantaged situation. We are unemployed in the city, and we suffer from very difficult social and economic circumstances. I want to return to my village. My village is burnt by the soldiers and the village guards. I was hoping to go back to my village thanks to the new law, but then we heard that there is a plan to build a dam which will flood our village. I have dozen hectares of registered land, nobody asked me what will happen with me. With the construction of the dam, my land and family graves in the village will be flooded. Who will take the responsibility for flooding them? While we expected to get compensation, now we are confronted with the dam: at a very unexpected time, without being asked about our opinion.

We have already been socially, economically and psychologically devastated due to the burning of our village. While we were thinking that returning to our village would be a way of making up for that loss, the decision to build a dam will have irreparable negative impacts. In the case that we can return to our village, where we have our family graves, memories, and many values, we have a chance to gather our family together again.

My expectation is that all the intellectuals, authors, the EU and all democratic organisations will show sensibility for our issue. They have to support us and other people who are in the same situation. We have already suffered enough loss. We had been waiting for so long for some positive developments regarding our situation, but now the dam will be a definitive blow against my family.

Village Yazlica, Province of Siirt

Cumhuriyet Aydin

17.06.2006